



Winter 2007
Volume 7, Issue 1

Inside this Issue

- 1 In the Spotlight
- 1 HTE Training Begins
- 2 Liaison Spotlight
- 2 Bonding for HUB Vendors
- 3 CMPI Welcomes Judge Biscoe
- 3 HUB Program Highlights
- 4 Purchasing Agent Keynote Speaker at WBCSW Luncheon
- 4 Info for Liaisons
- 5 Special Information

Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M.
Purchasing Agent

Travis County
Commissioners Court
County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe
Pct. 1 Commissioner Ron Davis
Pct. 2 Commissioner Sarah Eckhardt
Pct. 3 Commissioner Gerald Daugherty
Pct. 4 Commissioner Margaret Gomez

Travis County
Purchasing Board
County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe
Pct. 3 Cnty Commissioner Gerald Daugherty
261st District Ct. Judge Lora Livingston
201st District Ct. Judge Suzanne Covington
331st District Ct. Judge Bob Perkins

Travis County
Purchasing Quarterly
Sylvia Lopez, Contributing Editor
Jorge Talavera, Contributing Editor
Betty Chapa, Contributing Editor
Jerome T. Guerrero, Layout/Writer

Contact Us:
Travis County Purchasing Office
314 West 11th Street, Suite 400
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 854-9700
www.co.travis.tx.us

Travis County Purchasing Quarterly

In the Spotlight Mike Long

By Jerome T. Guerrero

"I love to socialize - I love being around people," says Mike Long, Purchasing Agent Assistant. Approaching his third year with Travis County, Mike is the guy that you can depend on to help you when you need a professional services contract.

In his 20 plus years of purchasing experience, he always has a smile on his face.

Born to a native Texan mother and a WWII and Korean War veteran in Germany, Mike traveled with his military career father until his father retired in 1966. The oldest of three, his family settled in the Austin area. After graduating from McCallum High School, he started working for Hart Graphics in the ware-



house department.

His father instilled in him a strong work ethic that impressed his various employers. During a temp job for the City of Austin while a junior in high school, Mike impressed the staff so much that they suggested he apply for an opening after he graduated from high school. He did not get that job at

continued on page 2

H-T-E Training Hosted by Purchasing Office

By Jerome T. Guerrero

"It may not look like a regular class but the students were eager and the teacher was ready..."

In 2006, the Purchasing Office launched the first class of HTE training. Rose Garcia, Purchasing Agent Assistant and Patricia Estrada, Purchasing Support Specialist were the two class instructors. Some students were

veteran Travis County employees while others were recent hires with less than one month under their belt.

"The class is geared towards beginners," said Ms. Garcia. However, it is

very clear from the response and comments that an advanced class may be introduced in the future.

The main purpose of the class is to teach users how to correctly enter a purchase requisition.

The most frequent errors are an insufficient description and incorrect commodity codes.

Questions and comments are always wel-

comed in the Purchasing Office, call us at 854-9700. If you would like to sign up for the HTE training class visit the Travis County intranet under Human Resources.



Liaison Spotlight

By Jerome T. Guerrero

Joe Kertz

Joe Kertz, Senior Financial Analyst for Criminal Court Administration, struck me as someone who never says no to an adventure. One of his most fulfilling adventures is working with K - 3rd graders Sunday school class. It's an intimidating environment, but Joe maintains his smile and cheerful face. Sometimes he will don his "Preacher Joe" outfit, which is a cowboy preacher character he created. He maintains a servant's attitude in his church and in his work.

Starting in Juvenile Court in 2002 and moving to Criminal Court in 2004, he handles the contracts, payroll, office needs, travel and applications for court appointed attorneys. Additionally, he researches and determines the specifications needed for any major purchase for the courts. The Criminal Court Administration consists of five county courts and six district courts (soon to be seven).

Joe stays busy with his work.

The youngest of eight children, Joe was born in North Dakota. After graduating from high school in Minnesota, he attended the University of North Dakota for one year. He applied to The University of Texas at Austin to be close to his father who moved to McAllen, Texas. Sight unseen, Joe applied and was accepted. He earned his BBA and MBA.

Joe met his wife Martha after he graduated from UT. He was working for IBM when his friend set him up for a 'group blind date.' "It was love at first sight," for them. Joe and Martha have three children, Joseph, Erika, and Ezekiel.

There is always a smile on Joe's face when he goes on an adventure.

Joe can be reached at joseph.kertz@co.travis.tx.us



HUB Program Partnering with UT Systems to Assist HUB Vendors with Bonding

By Jerome T. Guerrero

"Sorry Mr. Smith, but we cannot accept your bid proposal because you don't have enough bonding capacity for this project..."

For many small contractors, the lure of being awarded a construction contract over \$100,000 is the next step in expanding their business into the 'big league.' However, in order to win that big contract, the contractor must establish that they have the knowledge, experience and financial responsibility to fulfill it.

The HUB Staff has been participating in meetings organized by The University of Texas Systems (UT Systems). Other participants including the City of Austin, Capital Metro, Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and the Community Mentor Protégé Initiative (CMPI), are creating a program that can assist HUB vendors to make that next step into bidding and winning larger con-

tracts with these institutions.

In 2005, UT Systems began a program for certified vendors to meet with representatives of the bonding and surety industry. Continuing in the Spring of 2007, a training series will start. HUB vendors will need to pre-qualify before signing up for training. Upon qualifying for the training, vendors meet with Certified Public Accountants (CPAs), QuickBooks® trainers and bonding/surety representatives to learn how to prepare their financials to increase their bonding capacity.

Course length and locations are four to six weeks with classes offered at different locations in Austin. Participants need to attend at least one class a week to complete the program.

If you know of contractors that can benefit from this program, contact the Purchasing Office HUB Staff at 854-9700.



In The Spotlight, continued from page 1

the city but would later take a job with the city.

After working in various warehouse positions, his chance to work for the city came again in 1980. He worked in warehousing at the Holly Power Plant, then moved to the Seaholm Power Plant in 1985 to work in the purchasing department for the electric utility. Realizing the need to improve himself, he began working on and received his Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) in 1994. Upon retiring in 2002 from the city, he became a lifetime CPPB.

During his brief retirement, he played golf and "watched a lot

of sports." Realizing that he needed to keep busy, he applied for several state jobs and even considered going into sales. But the County was fortunate to acquire him. "Cyd was a little reluctant to hire me," he says. "She wanted to know if she could get a few years out of me." Overall, Mike has been an excellent addition to the purchasing staff.

"I'm where I'm supposed to be... and I'm happy." He likes to spend his time after work walking his Dripping Springs homestead, looking at the stars and "enjoying the open space." The open space around Dripping Springs is closing in on him. It saddens him to see so much growth around his home. "I may need to move... because I'm a simple country boy at heart."

CMPI Welcomes Judge Biscoes Comments

By Jerome T. Guerrero

October 11, 2006 - Over 75 vendors, business professionals and government officials attended the **CMPI - A Proven Solution** event at the Norris Conference Center. Several business

owners gave testimonies about the struggles and triumphs of working with, and for, their mentors.

Helping the construction industry was one of the key factors that inspired several mentors to take on protégés. Ken Wattinger of VRW Construction Co., Inc., signed on as a mentor "to help the industry and to help the individual." But he gained a qualified subcontractor and friend in Larry Mitchell of Professional Wallcoverings. The mentor/protégé rela-



...Community Mentor Protege Initiative
Adding Value to Our Austin Area Community!

tionship is an "important part of my business," said Mr. Mitchell.

Judge Samuel T. Biscoe addressed the au-

dience about how everyone has had a mentor in their life. Judge Biscoe also stressed the need for more participants in the program. "What saddens me most is we do not have a few hundred more that have graduated (from the CMPI program) and we do not have a few hundred more mentors (to match with protégés)." He asserted, "Travis County will be there to support the program," in their efforts.

For more information about the CMPI program, call 512-928-8180. ✍

Quote of the Day

"I came to realize that life lived to help others is the only one that matters and that it is my duty...this is my highest and best use as a human."

Ben Stein, *E! Online*, 12-20-03

Special Events Calendar

February 7, 2007

Killeen/Fort Hood Government Vendor Conference & Expo
Presented by: Central Texas Business Resource Center,
Contact Marcus Carr at
(254) 200-2001 or
marusc@workforcelink.com

February 14 - 17, 2007

Houston
TAAACC 8th Annual State-wide Conference and Business Fair
Address: JW Marriott Houston, TX
Information:
Contact:
Annette Smith at
asmith@austin.utexas.edu

February 15, 2007

Austin
7th Annual Purchasing and HUB Connection Forum
Texas Workforce Comm.
1117 Trinity St., Room 304
A&B Austin, Texas 78701
Contact Ardra Alexander at
(512) 463-2284 or Mike Labinski at (512) 542-6312
1 to 4 p.m.

LIFE

Mountains rise and rivers flow to the sea
Clouds sail across azure sky in peace
Forests grow and fields glow with flowers
And roses spread their perfume in bowers
For all these things there is a beginning
And in due time the required ending
But like the seasons that come and go
We should always have a glow
For every day put a smile upon your face
And live a life filled with grace.

© Donald E. Rollack
December 27, 2006

HUB Program Outreach Highlights

October 4th - Attended the Central South Texas Minority Business Council (CSTMBC) Vendor Fair "Let's Do Business" in San Antonio.

October 11th - Attended the CMPI event at the Norris Conference Center.

November 9th - Attended the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GAHCC) Procurement Fair at the Eastview Campus of Austin Community College.

November 15th - Hosted the "Doing Business As" (DBA) Workshop at the Work-Source Center.

December 8th - Attended the City of San Antonio/Bexar County small business conference in San Antonio.

County Purchasing Agent Keynote Speaker at Women's Business Council Luncheon

On December 7, Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M., Travis County Purchasing Agent, was the keynote speaker at the Women's Business

Council Southwest (WBCSW) luncheon, hosted by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA). Ms. Grimes presented the basic structure of the purchasing process and emphasized the value of having a fully supported and vibrant HUB program.

Attendees received information by County HUB Staff on procurement opportunities and the benefits of HUB, M/WBE and DBE certification. Cyd discussed legislation, authority and laws concerning the importance of the function of the purchasing agent. "It is important that the purchasing agent is responsible and ethical when dealing with taxpayer monies... that the county is getting the best value."



Some of the responsibilities of the purchasing agent are to ensure compliance with the County Pur-

chasing Act as well as other state and federal laws applying to county purchasing and to provide equal access to all vendors, including HUBs in participating in the com-

petitive acquisition of goods and services. Purchasing is an essential county government business function because it effects the budget and the county's bond ratings. Integrity and efficiency are crucial components of its credibility because even the slightest perception of abuse and misuse threatens the public confidence.



Info for Liaisons

The HUB Program has started the process of implementing the HUB Tracking software. The HUB staff will tentatively use the software by March 1 to start tracking a major construction project.

Eventually, the HUB Program will track all construction projects and commodity purchases. There will be a major announcement to inform contractors, subcontractors, supplies and liaisons for training and procedures.

Special thanks...

to Alton Jones for delivering construction plans and spec books to various local plan rooms. This free courtesy helps potential bidders view Travis County projects. Also, an extended thank you to Robert Glasper and Donna Holt for helping the business community!

NOTEWORTHY...

Congratulations!!

... to Bonnies S. Floyd, Assistant Purchasing Agent, who recently passed her Certified Public Purchasing Officer (CPPO) examination. In addition to understanding purchasing laws and ethics, Ms. Floyd had to demonstrate her knowledge concerning administration and personnel management in a purchasing office setting. The Purchasing Office is proud of Bonnie. The office continues to gain in experience and knowledge.

Welcome

Commissioner Sarah Eckhardt, Precinct 2, to the Commissioners Court. She took office January 2, 2007.

New Purchasing Board Member

Precinct 4 Commissioner and Purchasing Board Chairperson Margaret Gomez, has stepped down from the board. County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe will replace her as a board member. The new chairperson will be selected at a later date.

e-Bid

For the first quarter (Oct - Dec. 06) \$88,504 dollars were saved. The dollars saved is based on budgeted amount versus actual dollars spent. Keep reminding vendors to register at www.rfpdepot.com It's easy, it's quick and it's free!

Special Information

Travis County
Purchasing Quarterly

Supplement to the Winter 2007 Issue

Travis County Extension Launches Youth Gardening Program

By Robert (Skip) Richter, CEA Horticulture

Some great things are happening in the Travis County Extension Youth Gardening Program. Travis County Extension Horticulturist Skip Richter is proud to announce the arrival of Machele Dunlop our new Horticulture Program Specialist.

Machele received training from Texas Cooperative Extension's state specialists Lisa Whittlesey and Randy Seargraves creators of the nationally acclaimed Junior Master Gardener Program.

Machele organized a special training session at the Extension Office to teach Travis County educators and others to use the JMG curriculum and has assembled activity bins for several popular JMG training sessions. She will be participating in a Region 13 workshop at the end of July that will reach almost 60 teachers. The topics are "Literature in the Garden" and "Wildlife Gardener," two JMG units of study.

Under the direction of Skip Richter, Travis County Extension Horticulturist, Machele has designed a fun "menu" that shows the different resources Extension offers to support youth gardening programs. The menu is a marketing tool that will be distributed across Travis County. Schools, youth organizations or anyone with youth can pick an choose through a variety of gardening related services and program provided by Texas Cooperative Extension and Master Gardener volunteers that help youth learn valuable life skills. Gardening is not the end goal of the program, but rather just another tool to reach youth and make a lasting difference in their lives.

An innovative new container garden dubbed the "Grow Box" is one such offering on the Youth Gardening Menu. The

Grow Box, designed and invented by Travis County Master Gardeners Ron Miller and Don Freeman, is a semi-self-watering, container perfect for small spaces. The Grow Box allows groups without a garden plot to still be able to grow

plants and learn about gardening.

The Grow Box is being piloted this summer with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Austin (South and East locations). It is a wonderful opportunity to teach at-risk youth about gardening, and the importance of fresh fruit and vegetables in our diets. If the Grow Box performs as well as expected, Extension will offer Grow Boxes to youth groups across the county beginning later this year.

This fall, Master Gardener volunteers will provide gardening support and horticulture expertise to teachers and students. Many teachers with school gardens have asked for a "Master Gardener Mentor" to assist them throughout the school year. Also, five campuses received funding from the National Wildlife Federation to create a wildlife habitat for students. We are working closely with these schools to coordinate Master Gardener support and ensure a continuing presence from the Travis County Extension Office.

Our youth gardening programs grow more than just plants. We are growing great youth here in Travis County!

"Gardening is not the end goal of the program, but rather just another tool to reach youth and make a lasting difference in their lives."



Reprinted with permission from the Travis County Extension newsletter Fall 2006 issue